



March 2002



SCHOOL FINANCE UPDATE

A Monthly Newsletter Published by the School Budgeting and Accounting Division

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Linda McCulloch, State Superintendent

Federal Impact Aid Applications Due April 12, 2002

Districts applying for Impact Aid should send the original (with original signatures) and one copy of the application to the U.S. Department of Education by April 12, 2002.

Applications must be received by that date or bear a U.S. Postal Service postmark no later than this date.

Also send one copy to OPI. For further information, contact: Tal Redpath (406) 444-3024 or tredpath@state.mt.us.

Budgeting/Accounting and Tuition ARMs Hearings Set

OPI recently set hearing dates for two Administrative Rule (ARM) hearings. One set of proposed changes covers tuition and special education funding rules, and the other addresses school budgeting and accounting rules, including sections implementing the legislation affecting fund transfers and investment accounts.

You will receive copies of the notices of hearings, including the full text of proposed changes, at the OPI official district e-mail address for your district.

Please review the proposed changes thoroughly, as these changes do affect most districts. Your review and comments are crucial to the rule-making process. Call Bev Marlow, OPI Paralegal, at (406) 444-3172 with any questions. Comments must be submitted to OPI either in writing or at the hearing, which OPI will hold at various locations statewide

via teleconference on April 30, 2002 at 10:00 AM (Investment Accounts and School Finance) and 10:30 AM (Tuition and Special Education).

FY01 A-133 Audits Due March 31

FY01 A-133 audits are due to OPI by March 31. If the district cannot submit the audit on time, a Federal waiver is required. (See page 600-2 of the Grants Handbook.) FY01 non-A-133 audits are due to OPI by June 30, 2002. Don't forget to send 4 copies of your audit and a response letter to the Department of Commerce and one copy to OPI. Call Nancy Hall at 444-9852 or e-mail to nhall@state.mt.us if you have questions.

1st Semester Transportation Reimbursements in March Payment



OPI has included your transportation payment advice with the March direct state aid mailing. The payment advice shows the amount of state payment and also indicates the amount the county should pay the district for 1st semester. Contact: Maxine Mougeot (406)444-3096 or mmougeot@state.mt.us.

For questions or additional information about items in this newsletter, please contact:

Joan Anderson (406) 444-1960 janderson@state.mt.us

Are you Ready for District E-mail?

OPI notified each district last August about a new district e-mail system that OPI will eventually use to send electronic payment advices and other written communications. **Here's how it works:**

1. OPI Sends District E-mail.

- OPI e-mails a message to the official district e-mail account on METNET.
- All OPI e-mail to anyone at the district will go to that e-mail address, including messages to the superintendent, clerk, principals and teachers.

2. Districts Receive the Messages.

- Someone at the district who has been assigned to direct the e-mail messages will either:

a) Login daily to the district e-mail account on METNET and retrieve the messages.

OR

b) Receive the district e-mails automatically via a personal e-mail account already in use (i.e., AOL, Yahoo, Hotmail, MSN, etc.). To receive it automatically, the responsible staff member must login to the district's METNET account and set the mailbox preferences to automatically forward to a personal e-mail address. The setting allows you to automatically forward to one or more e-mail addresses.

3. Districts Distribute E-mails.

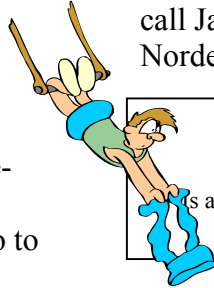
- Responsible district staff member distributes e-mail messages to the appropriate district staff people. This must be done timely, since some materials are dated.

District e-mail is already being sent. Effective July 1, 2002, it will be the only way OPI will send certain information to districts.

OPI currently mails the advices for Direct State Aid payments but soon we'll send them electronically instead. **Please become familiar with the system**

to avoid any break in service when we transition to full e-mail payment advices.

If you need assistance setting it up correctly, please call Janet Andrew at (406) 444-2765 or Betsy Nordell at (406) 444-1626.



In case you missed it....

Technology and Flex Fund Info

is available on the OPI website at www.opi.state.mt.us under <School Finance>.

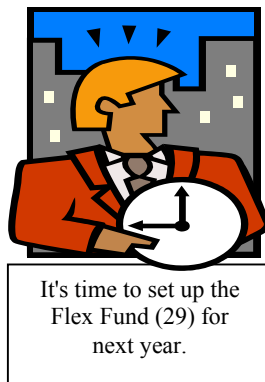
BPE Reviews Proposed Bus Standards

In March, OPI Pupil Transportation Director, Maxine Mougeot, presented the proposed school bus standards to the Board of Public Education (BPE) for their review. At the next BPE meeting on May 16 & 17, 2002, the Board is expected to approve the standards and set an administrative rule hearing date to amend the ARM adopting the standards for the state. Proposed standards are posted on the OPI website at www.opi.state.mt.us for your review. OPI contact: Maxine Mougeot, State Transportation Director, (406) 444-3096 or mmougeot@state.mt.us.

MAEFAIRS News

1) MAEFAIRS Training -- OPI will offer MAEFAIRS training in Helena on July 31, 2002. More information and registration forms will be available soon. All new MAEFAIRS registered users (i.e., anyone who's keypunching the numbers into the program for a district or coop) should plan to attend the sessions for training on the final budget and annual trustees' financial summary module. The session is free and will be approximately 5 hours long.

OPI will not be holding full MAEFAIRS training sessions this year at the MASBO Summer Conference in June as we have in the past. However, the conference will include a one-hour



It's time to set up the Flex Fund (29) for next year.

update and refresher course for experienced MAEFAIRS users.

2) If you have not used MAEFAIRS before OR If your district changed clerks since last year: Please make sure you are registered to use MAEFAIRS. The MAEFAIRS system will be used during July and August to submit the district's FY02 Trustees' Financial Summary and FY03 Budget. Contact: Nica Carte, (406) 444-4401 or ncarte@state.mt.us.

New Clerk's Workshop, April 17 & 18

A 2-day training session for new clerks will be held April 17 & 18, 2002, in Helena. The training is provided by the Montana Association of School Business Officials (MASBO). Several OPI staff will also present portions of the session. Topics include all aspects of the school district clerk/business manager's job and is invaluable for clerks that are new within the past 1-2 years. MASBO will charge for the seminar and pre-registration is required. To register, contact Lynda Brannon (MASBO) at (406) 442-5599 or masbo@in-tch.com.

Indirect Cost Rate Applications for FY03 Grant Projects

Applications and information concerning indirect cost rates for FY 2002-03 are included in this mailing. Indirect cost recoveries are OPTIONAL; but you must have a rate approved by OPI if you intend to claim indirect cost recoveries from grants in FY 03. The OPI-approved rate can be used on state and federal grants, including grants administered by OPI or received directly from a federal agency or another state agency. Application forms are due back to OPI by May 31, 2002. Contact Jim Oberembt at 444-1257 or e-mail joberembt@state.mt.us.

Recommended Reading for GASB 34

GASB 34 is a national accounting and reporting standard that will significantly change the format of a school district's audited financial statements starting in FY04. To find out more about how the standard applies to schools, OPI recommends reading the implementation guide for schools written by GASB and the Association of School Business Officials (ASBO).

GASB Statement 34 Implementation Recommendations for School Districts is now available from the Association of School Business Officials (ASBO). To order online, visit their website at www.asbointl.org. Click on the purple star that says, "Order ASBO's GASB #34 Implementation Guide" and then scroll down to Item #99. Cost is \$26.50 for ASBO members and \$35.00 for non-members, plus shipping. You can also contact ASBO International, 11401 North Shore Drive, Reston, VA 20190-4200. Phone is (703) 478-0405

School Finance Calendar is New and Improved!! (and Electronic)

Please see the School Finance Calendar posted on the OPI website at www.opi.state.mt.us. Click on the tab called "Calendars" and then click the "School Finance Calendar." We'll be glad to help you find it! OPI Contact: Nica Carte at (406) 444-4401 or ncarte@state.mt.us.

